

Chief's Update May 6, 2011

One item that I wanted to address specifically in the Chief's update is the new patrol schedule. Although most have heard about some of the elements of the change, I wanted to briefly review some of the major components of the change and why the change was necessary.

Background

Patrol has been staffed in a similar way for well over a decade. The idea behind this staffing approach was that officers spread throughout the city based on geography in beats would encourage ownership of an area and would efficiently distribute officers around the hours and days of the week. In addition, our previous scheduling placed a heavy emphasis on time officers spent on calls for service.

Some of the challenges with our old model was that patrol staffing was based more on geography than it was on crime. Moreover, using the time spent on calls for service by officers was not always a great indicator of workload. For example, an hour of time for an officer could be handling five high priority calls for service and taking two reports, or it could be handling one low priority call for service with no report.

The new patrol schedule seeks to focus more on crime rather than geography, on crime fighting flexibility, service to the neighborhoods, and balancing workloads of officers.

What it looks like

The City will be divided into quadrants (aka zones). The two zones in the southern part of the City have a fairly even distribution of calls for service, time on call, UCR Part I and Part II crime and evenly distributed officers. However, in north Tempe staffing to the data was balanced to meet some of the operational and geographic realities. As a result, the current beat 11 was attached to the northeast zone.

Another notable change is that start times for squads have been significantly reduced from thirteen different start times to five. Our hope is that the reduction in the start times will help us better manage the fleet, improve training opportunities and coordination, and improve communication between officers and supervisors.

Finally, call signs had to be changed which will take some adjustment. The new call signs include elements for start times, patrol designator (Paul or Edward), zone, and unit number on the squad. For example, an officer working the dayshift in the northeast zone will be 1P11. An officer working midnights in south Tempe would be 5E41.

Why Now?

We have a lot of change in the organization right now. Everyone in the organization is diligently working on some transition. It might be the PIN project, new work schedule, or new job altogether. Although no time for significant change is ideal, the changing technology and the high demands placed on our organization required us to change now.

The new patrol schedule was developed based on the absolute best information available, getting lots of input at all levels of the organization and applying what we learned to develop the most effective, efficient schedule to address public safety in our community.